

INFO	LOG-00	EEB-00	AID-00	A-00	CA-00	CCO-00	CG-00
	COME-00	CTME-00	INL-00	DOEE-00	DOTE-00	PDI-00	DS-00
	DHSE-00	EUR-00	OIGO-00	FAAE-00	FBIE-00	VCi-00	H-00
	TEDE-00	INR-00	INSE-00	IO-00	LAB-01	L-00	CAC-00
	MOFM-00	MOF-00	M-00	VCIE-00	DCP-00	NRC-00	NSAE-00
	ISN-00	OCS-00	NIMA-00	PA-00	PM-00	GIWI-00	PRS-00
	P-00	ISNE-00	DOHS-00	FMPC-00	SP-00	SSO-00	SS-00
	USSS-00	NCTC-00	ASDS-00	CBP-00	SCRS-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00
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C O N F I D E N T I A L LAHORE 000069

E.O. 12958: DECL: 4/3/2019
 TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PK](#)
 SUBJECT: CHIEF MINISTER SHAHBAZ SHARIF READY TO CORRECT GOVERNOR'S MISTAKES

REF: Lahore 68

CLASSIFIED BY: Bryan Hunt, Principal Officer, Consulate Lahore,
 U.S. Department of State.
 REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

11. (C) Summary: Newly restored Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif told Principal Officer (PO) April 3 that he will focus on the terrorism issues that afflicted Punjab while Governor Salman Taseer had taken over. He noted that the March 31 court ruling only stayed his disqualification from office, while his brother Nawaz's ineligibility stood for the moment, but he expected that the Supreme Court would look favorably in the final ruling in mid-May. Shahbaz related that the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has offered to maintain the coalition with the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) that the court ruling had restored, but he waited for the final decision from the PPP. Regarding the PPP's offer for the PML-N to join the federal government, Shahbaz laid down several conditions and reiterated that his party lacks trust in President Asif Zardari. End Summary.

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 Restored But Not Refreshed
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12. (C) In an April 3 meeting with Principal Officer, Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif reflected on the deterioration of Punjab's security under the leadership of governor's rule. He decided that Governor Salman Taseer had ignored a specific warning issued March 25 that targeted police training facilities. As a result, he explained, only three officers "without even sticks" guarded the entrance to the Manawan Training Center when it came under attack March 30. He worried that, when connected with the attack on the Sri Lankan cricket team, Punjab now faces a stronger, more pervasive threat than before, but he resolved to confront the terrorists during the continuation of his tenure. Shahbaz related that he would preside over a gathering of security officials to discuss the threats to the province.

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 Court Ruling Gives New Life

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¶3. (C) Regarding the March 31 court ruling, Shahbaz clarified that the court only stayed the disqualification against him; his brother Nawaz's ineligibility remained standing because it did not immediately impact the government. He took the stay order as a sign that the Supreme Court will eventually rule in his and Nawaz's favor.

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PML-N To Wait for PPP Decision
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¶4. (C) Shahbaz confirmed press reports that the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has invited the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) to sustain the previous provincial government coalition, which the court ruling had also effectively restored. Although elements of the PPP appeared to lean in favor of the coalition, Shahbaz said that his party will wait for President Asif Zardari's decision, which will likely occur during the PPP's Central Executive Committee meeting in Naudero on April 3. (Note: The CEC meeting reportedly gave Zardari authority to decide.)

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PML-N Reluctant to Join Federal Government
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¶5. (C) PO asked whether the PML-N would take up the PPP's offer to re-form the coalition in the federal government. Shahbaz acknowledged the offer, but noted that the PPP must satisfy several conditions before the PML-N would feel comfortable. The pledge to create a committee in Parliament to implement the Charter of Democracy (COD) is only a start, he hedged. The PML-N would also like to see more powers given to the Prime Minister, the position of President reduced to the ceremonial figure that Pakistan's Constitution had intended, and far greater accountability on foreign assistance. PO assured Shahbaz that the U.S. would impose strict conditions and monitoring regimes on the increased assistance provided under the Kerry-Lugar legislation, but he noted that other countries, such as China and Saudi Arabia, usually lacked such strings when they provide financial support.

¶6. (C) Shahbaz added that a general lack of trust in Zardari also hampers the PML-N's enthusiasm for joining the federal government. He related that soon after the Long March resolution, Zardari resumed political games by delaying the restoration of Shahbaz and announcing a premature end to governor's rule. Shahbaz said that he preferred working with Prime Minister Gilani, who has stood by his word so far.

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Forward Bloc To Join Government Regardless
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¶7. (C) If the PPP decides to maintain its tie-up with the PML-N, Shahbaz noted, he would still reshuffle his cabinet to incorporate those "forward bloc" members of the Pakistan Muslim League (PML) who will support the PML-N. Accordingly, forward bloc members, now in the majority of the PML, attempted to force a change in the leader of the opposition April 3 with a motion in the provincial assembly. Former Punjab Minister of Education Imran Masood told PO that once the PML joins the cabinet, the leader of the opposition would again change to reflect the remaining PML members still opposing the PML-N and possibly the PPP.

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Don't Attack ISI
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¶8. (C) Shahbaz remarked that the recent comments from U.S. officials blaming the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) could only hurt Pakistan's effort to fight terrorism. He noted that ISI and the PML-N have had extremely bad relations in the past, but American criticisms of ISI's failure to act against extremism dampens the willingness of the agency to work against

terrorists. "Whether you like it or not, ISI is the only game in town," he advised.

¶9. (C) Comment: Following the brief, helter-skelter rule of Governor Taseer, Shahbaz's restoration brings a measure of stability and relief to the provincial government. His apparent decision to concentrate on security is a welcome one, and we will continue to press PML-N to shut down Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jamaat-ud-Dawa facilities.

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